

STATEMENT BY SENATOR MAX CLELAND
HEARING BY THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE ON THE OLYMPICS INVESTIGATION
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Mr. Chairman, it has been almost 10 years since that September day in 1990 when the announcement was made from Tokyo that Atlanta would host the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. The atmosphere in the city--and throughout Georgia--that morning was electric. People were tuned to the television, glued to the radio, waiting for the word. And when the word was Atlanta, the city united in a celebration that lasted, in various degrees, until the Olympic Flame was extinguished in Atlanta--and even beyond.

With that announcement in Tokyo, Atlanta became part of a 25 centuries old institution that began, appropriately enough, in the Golden Age of Greece. During the Ancient Games, there was no war, no fighting. A spirit of brotherhood prevailed--and no one came armed to Olympia. "Faster, higher, stronger"--the Olympics are about the pursuit of excellence in sports. But the contests are about the pursuit of moral excellence as well.

Pierre de Coubertin, who revived the Olympics over 100 years ago, warned that the Olympic Movement could be "beneficial or harmful according to the way in which it is handled." He said, and I quote: The Olympic Movement "may be a school of moral nobility and purity as well as of physical endurance and energy; but only on condition that you continually raise your conceptions of honour. . . to the height of your muscular strength."

The revelations made in the Salt Lake City case have cast a shadow over the Olympic Movement. All of us here today--indeed all of us worldwide who believe in the principles of the Olympics--want to see its reputation restored. We are all seeking a genuine commitment to reform. I look forward to hearing from our panelists on the progress being made to address the Salt Lake City allegations and restore the integrity of the Olympic Games.